

**Michael V. Pantalon, Ph.D.,  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry  
(in Psychology) Yale University School of Medicine  
Testimony in Support of SB 660 - An Act Requiring Drunken Drivers to Maintain a  
Period of Continuous Sobriety**

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Michael Pantalon and I am a licensed clinical psychologist and faculty member at Yale University. My practice has been focused on substance abuse and addiction counseling. I have spent the last 15 years developing, researching, teaching, coaching and training others in an effective and practical approach to Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) based on the scientifically-validated *Motivational Interviewing* technique. MET is used primarily in addiction recovery and uses a model which focuses on client-centered counseling designed to elicit lasting changes in behavior. At the request of Court Support Services Division, I am training Connecticut's probation and parole officers to use Motivational Interviewing techniques when dealing with offenders with substance and alcohol abuse issues. I have also conducted numerous workshops on Motivational Interviewing for corporations, drug rehabilitation centers, schools, health care settings, social service organizations and state departments of justice. **I am here to testify in support of SB 660 – An Act Requiring Drunken Drivers to Maintain a Period of Continuous Sobriety.**

One of the strongest factors in favor of SB 660 is its use of continuous alcohol monitoring which keeps the offender accountable for his or her actions and mandates a period of continuous sobriety. Any mental health provider working in the field of alcohol abuse would agree that it is the rare individual who accurately reports the full extent of their alcohol use, even when they are fully intending to be truthful. Many individuals who are court ordered to treatment minimize the extent of their alcohol use. Because alcohol is so quickly removed from the body and not detected by a breathalyzer which may be administered a few times a week, some may complete programs without ever obtaining abstinence. The current testing methods used for detecting alcohol consumption are insufficient because the window of detection is exceptionally small.

With continuous alcohol monitoring, testing takes place every hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Alcohol consumption will be detected and this ensures that the offender is held accountable for his or her actions. Furthermore, this type of monitoring provides an accurate assessment of offender's problem and the appropriate level of treatment can then be provided.

By enforcing the period of mandated sobriety with continuous alcohol monitoring, SB 660 also capitalizes on what has become very clear in the research literature on alcohol related disorders: **timely and accurate feedback regarding one's use of alcohol is critical to successful treatment.** (Project MATCH and COMBINE – see [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov).) This type of monitoring therefore not only holds the offender accountable but ensures that the treatment provider, with an accurate understanding of the severity of the problem, can respond in a timely and appropriate manner.

As an experienced practitioner in substance and alcohol abuse treatment, I strongly support SB 660 – An Act Requiring Drunken Drivers to Maintain a Period of Continuous Sobriety. It is a bill that is consistent with and supported by medical literature and represents the best way to deal with DUI recidivists.